

Cameron Tourism Board Meeting
January 21, 2025
City of Cameron City Hall 3rd Floor
100 S. Houston St. Cameron, Texas 76520
9:00 a.m. Minutes:

1. **Called to order:** Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. Present: Nil Bhakta, John Anderle, Carly Shuffield, Courtney Renauld, Ricky Tow, and Serina Cole. Absent: Kyle Barrett. Loretta Walthall resigned her position effectively January 15, 2025, via email. Carly Shuffield attended as a substitute for Spring Janke, who was unavailable due to travel. Carly will assume the role of Chamber President on March 1, 2025.
2. **Visitor Comments:** None
3. **Approval of Minutes from August 22, 2024:** Motion by John Anderle, seconded by Nil Bhakta. Approved unanimously.
4. **Election of Officers:**
 - a. President: Motion by Nil Bhakta to nominate John Anderle. Accepted and approved unanimously.
 - b. Vice President: Motion by John Anderle to nominate Nil Bhakta. Accepted and approved unanimously.
 - c. Secretary/Treasurer: The Board agreed to combine these roles. Courtney Renauld volunteered and was unanimously approved.
5. **Discussion to Fill At Large and Business 2 Board Vacancies:** The Board agreed to submit candidates for At-Large and Business 2 positions via email to Tourism Coordinator Serina Cole before the next meeting. Candidates will be contacted and presented to the City Council for an appointment.
6. **Approval of Financials:** Motion made to approve by Nil Bhakta, seconded by John Anderle of Financial summary showing a bank balance of \$208,875.93 ending 10-1-2024 and with all bills paid on 1-16-2025, there is a bank balance of \$205,948.84.
7. **New/Old Business:**
 - a. **Introduction of Tourism Coordinator:** Serina Cole began employment on December 16, 2024.
 - b. **Meeting Schedule for 2025.** The Board discussed the 2025 meeting schedule and agreed that holding quarterly meetings would be the most effective approach.
 - c. **Post Event Report of 2024-2025 Projects:** Updates provided on the completed and funded Steak, Stein, and Wine Festival and Port Sullivan Historical Cemetery project. The Board requested a revision to the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) Fund Application to clarify that 100% of HOT funds allocated for advertising or promotion of an event

must be directed toward marketing efforts targeting areas at least 70 miles outside the Cameron city limits. HOT Application are to be made and ready to review at the next Tourism Advisory Board meeting.

- d. **Discussion on Event Planning Responsibilities:** The Board discussed shifting planning responsibilities for the Steak, Stein, and Wine Festival and Spring Festival to the Tourism Coordinator to reduce the Chamber Director's workload. Carly Shuffield, incoming Chamber President, expressed the Chamber's intent to step back from the Spring Festival. The Board agreed that a collaborative effort is necessary. The Chamber will continue to lead the 4th of July celebration and Christmas Parade.
 - e. **Website Update:** Serina Cole reported the addition of a Tourism portal on the City of Cameron website and includes resources such as the Hotel Occupancy Tax ordinance, reports, applications for HOT funds, and other information relevant to local businesses and organizations. She also outlined collaborative plans with Ginger Watkins, CEDC to revamp the "Welcome to Cameron" as the public-facing tourism platform and will feature points of interest, historical information, an event calendar, and the interactive map.
 - f. **Social media:** Serina Cole recommended continuing the use of the City of Cameron, Chamber of Commerce, and Welcome to Cameron social media channels to cross-promote tourism information and event details. The Board agreed with this recommendation.
 - g. **Explore Cameron Presentation:** Serina Cole presented the Explore Cameron campaign, set to launch in March 2025. The campaign aims to boost year-round tourism by showcasing and promoting Cameron's unique characteristics and history.
 - h. **Texas Travel Alliance Membership:** Serina Cole requested the Board approve an annual expenditure of \$500 to become a member of the Texas Travel Alliance. The motion to approve this expenditure was made by Nil Bhakta and seconded by John Anderle. All approved this motion.
 - i. **Meeting Schedule Recommendation:** The Board recommended meeting quarterly beginning in April 2025. Attendees reached a consensus that Tuesday mornings are an ideal time for future meetings.
8. Motion made to Adjourn by John Anderle, seconded by Courtney Renauld at 10:35 a.m. All approved.